



H1N1 Partner and School Briefing

Date: December 16, 2009
To: All Rhode Islanders
From: Director of Health, David R. Gifford, MD, MPH
Re: Information on H1N1 and school-based vaccination clinics in Rhode Island

Local Influenza Activity Level: Regional¹, H1N1 predominant circulating strain

Rhode Island²: 355 hospitalized cases, 9 deaths

Sentinel Surveillance (% of visits due to influenza-like illness)³: Rhode Island: 2.37%, New England Region: 2.1%, Nation: 2.74%

First round of school-based H1N1 vaccination clinics concludes

This week HEALTH completed a very successful first round of its school-based H1N1 flu vaccination program. More than 113,000 children from kindergarten through grade 12 received the H1N1 vaccine at 421 school-based clinics. The first round of the program spanned six weeks and 28 school days. Of the students enrolled in schools that hosted clinics during this time period, approximately three-fourths received the vaccine. In mid January, HEALTH will begin a second round of school-based H1N1 vaccination clinics for elementary school students younger than 10 years old at the time that they received their first shots. Children who are 10 years of age or older do not need second doses of H1N1 vaccine.

H1N1 vaccine available for new populations

The following populations can now receive H1N1 vaccine from their Rhode Island healthcare providers:

- Children in kindergarten through grade 12 who did not receive their first doses of H1N1 vaccine at their schools.
- Young adults through the age of 24
- Adults through the age of 64 with chronic illnesses.

Adults with chronic illnesses include those with chronic lung diseases, cardiovascular diseases, blood disorders, and immunosuppression due to disease or medications. Healthcare providers have been urged to contact their patients with chronic illnesses.

H1N1 flu-related deaths in Rhode Island

The number of confirmed H1N1 flu-related deaths in Rhode Island remains at nine. During a HEALTH press briefing on December 15, 2009, the recent death of a Rhode Islander with influenza-like illness, possibly due to H1N1, was reported and remains under investigation.

Registration deadline extended for clinic for out-of-state college students

Rhode Islanders through 24 years of age who attend out-of-state colleges can now pre-register, through December 21, for an H1N1 flu vaccination clinic. Students should note that this date represents a deadline extension. The clinic will run sometime between December 26, 2009 and January 8, 2010. HEALTH will announce the exact date, location, and hours of operation of the clinic in the coming weeks. Students can register online at: <http://www.health.ri.gov/flu/about/schoolh1n1clinics/outofstatecollegeclinics/index.php>.

¹ Rhode Island reported regional activity for the week of December 6 to December 12, 2009. Percentages of influenza-like illness remain above baseline in all five regions of the state. For details see <http://www.health.ri.gov/flu/about/surveillance/>.

² Confirmed and probable hospitalizations and deaths since September 1, 2009

³ Influenza-like illness activity from November 29 to December 5, 2009

To view a video message about H1N1 flu vaccination, please see:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=En0ijnYVkiQ>

College and university-based H1N1 vaccination clinics

H1N1 flu vaccination clinics began running on the campuses of colleges and universities with non-residential student populations this week. On December 1, colleges and universities with residential student populations began running H1N1 flu vaccination clinics. All colleges, universities, and technical schools in Rhode Island have now offered H1N1 vaccine to enrolled students through the age of 24. While some schools are no longer running clinics, all campus clinics will close by December 18. For information about clinics at an individual school, contact that school's health services office. For general information about college and university-based clinics, see www.health.ri.gov.

Voluntary H1N1 vaccine recall NOT safety related

Last week one of the manufacturers of H1N1 vaccine announced a voluntary recall of specific shipments of vaccine for children from 6 months through 35 months of age. While this includes some of Rhode Island's allocated vaccine, **this recall was not safety related**. The manufacturer issued the recall after observing a slight decrease in the vaccine's strength over time. **The recalled vaccine provided children who received it with more than sufficient immunity for a first dose. Children who received this vaccine do not need re-administrations of their first doses.** The Rhode Island Department of Health (HEALTH) contacted the pediatricians and family physicians who administered this recalled vaccine. They are exchanging the recalled vaccine and they will make children who received this vaccine priorities when administering second doses.

Stay healthy this holiday season

The Rhode Island Department of Health (HEALTH) reminds all Rhode Islanders to practice healthful hygiene when gathering with family and friends this holiday season. Individuals can help prevent the spread of H1N1 flu by washing their hands regularly with warm water and soap or alcohol-based hand gels, by coughing and sneezing into their sleeves, and most importantly by staying home and avoiding social gatherings when ill. For all of HEALTH's flu prevention recommendations, see <http://www.health.ri.gov/flu/about/prevention/>.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) launched a public awareness campaign to help travelers stay healthy this flu season. This campaign includes the recommendation that individuals with the flu or flu-like illness wait to travel until they have been fever-free (temperature less than 100.4°F/38°C) for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications. More information for travelers is available at <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/content/novel-h1n1-flu.aspx>.

H1N1 Information Line holiday hours of operation

HEALTH's H1N1 Information Line (401-222-8022) will close at noon on December 24 and December 31 and will be closed all day on December 25 and January 1. The Information Line will otherwise keep its normal hours this holiday season – Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. Responders on this line are prepared to answer H1N1-related questions in English and Spanish.

December's remaining Partner and School Briefings

HEALTH will release its next three Partner and School Briefings on Tuesdays (December 22, 2009; December 29, 2009; and January 6, 2010).

Resources

- HEALTH at <http://www.health.ri.gov>;
- Archived partner briefings and regular news updates: <http://www.health.ri.gov/news/flu/>
- H1N1 Information Line (M-F 8:30am- 4:30pm) 401-222-8022
- H1N1 email address h1n1@health.ri.gov
- <http://www.flu.gov>